

Images of evil:

Comparison of main villain representation in old (1985) and new (2018)
She-Ra animated series

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Abstract

This thesis delves into the characterization of the main villain in the cartoon series *She-Ra: Princess of Power* (1985) and its new rebooted version, *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power* (2018). This research has been conducted by analysing the main villain named Hordak in both series using the same baselines, such as designs and dialogue choices with references to applied character theory and affect control theory and by comparing the results. The analysis is limited and does not attempt to make definitive conclusions, but it draws some assumptions based on the results on how social expectations towards children's media might have changed during the years, and how comparing rebooted series with its original counterpart in terms of one character might illustrate that. The results show that the vast differences in the villain presentation between the two series are likely to illustrate a change in media trends as well as social expectations on what kind of content is suitable and profitable to target towards children, with a possibility of greater selection of target audiences for the new shows.

Tiivistelmä

Tämä kandidaatintyö käsittelee pääantagonistin hahmototeutusta animaationsarjassa *She-Ra: Mahdin prinsessa* (1985) sekä sen uudessa reboot-versiossa, *She-Ra - Mahdin prinsessat* (2018). Tämä tutkimus on suoritettu analysoimalla pääantagonisti Hordakin toteutusta kummassakin sarjassa käyttämällä samoja vertailukohtia, kuten hahmon visuaalisia yksityiskohtia sekä dialogia, ja vertailemalla näitä keskenään. Analyysin apuna on käytetty sovellettua hahmoteoriaa sekä vaikutuskontrolliteoriaa. Analyysi on rajoitettu, eikä sen tarkoituksena ole saada ratkaisevia lopputuloksia, vaan tehdä tiettyjä oletuksia tulosten pohjalta esimerkiksi siitä, kuinka sosiaaliset odotukset lasten mediaa kohtaan ovat saattaneet muuttua vuosien saatossa. Tulokset näyttävät, että monet erilaisuudet antagonistin toteutuksessa sarjojen välillä todennäköisesti viittaavat muuttuviin mediatrendeihin ja sosiaalisiin odotuksiin siitä, että minkälaista sisältöä on sopivaa ja kannattavaa kohdentaa lapsille animaationsarjoissa. Mahdollisuus kohderyhmien laajentumiselle on myös otettu huomioon.

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1 Introduction

The nuances of fiction with its structures and components has always been a point of interest for researchers, especially those who specialize in literary research; numerous classic works of fiction have been analysed multiple times over from different angles, paying attention into different components that give the fictive work its distinctive identity. In recent decades, evolution of video from VHS to streaming services has come with new perspectives of analysis, the visuality being the most distinct new addition to consider. This thesis will explore visual, serialised fiction.

Serialised fiction has its roots in novels that were published part by part in periodicals (Brake, L. & Demoor, M. 2009). Later this was also adapted into a new, visual form that is television series. Each episode in a series has a small story within it that adds to, or merely exists in greater singular story in a world of fiction and together build a bigger fictive work that in best cases takes advantage of the serialised format and works with the platform to strengthen story elements and characters alike. Delving deeper into the topic of characters in a story, a usual trend within a fictive story is that the characters represent different sides of the central struggle. The most archetypal interplay is often between the protagonist and antagonist, that often, but not always, are the hero and the villain, respectively. This format is often identifiable in a work of fiction, and in this thesis the role of the main villain will be explored deeper in the context of animated television series the character appears in.

This thesis analyses two animated series, the original and its newer reboot. The first series is named *She-Ra: Princess of Power*, produced in 1985 as a spinoff series for at that time vastly popular children's show *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe* (1983), and the second series is named *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power* (2018), made as a reboot of the original 1985's show with new writing and animation team.

The purpose of the thesis is to analyse the main villain of the original series, as well as his adaptation in the rebooted series. The findings will be compared with references to character theory and affect control theory to conclude what kind of methods have been utilised to make the villain investable character within the two series, what are the differences between the realisations of the villain between the two animated series, and what the differences between the original and the reboot indicate about the media trends of the times the shows were produced in.

This will be done by looking at both original and the reboot show and notating same areas of interest within them which are then analysed and compared, and in the end, the results are discussed, and conclusions are drawn based on them.

2 The research material

In this section, the two series under analysis are distinguished from each other as well as their core conflict is explained to lay out the basis for the analysis.

2.1 She-Ra: Princess of Power (1985)

To have an illustrative example on how change in social expectations and trends in entertainment is reflected in adaptation of an older animated series into a modern one, one qualifying example has been chosen for closer analysis and comparison. An animated series She-Ra: Princess of Power originally aired in 1985 as a spin-off series of one of the popular animated children's shows of that time, He-Man and the Masters of the Universe (1983). The purpose of the series was to be an alternate take on the He-Man universe that is aimed towards young girls instead of young boys. She-Ra: Princess of Power aired until the end of 1986 when it was cancelled after 2 seasons and 93 episodes. The series is based on a toy line and was popular with children when it aired (Staples, V. (n.d.)).

The series depicts the adventures of He-Man's (He-Man and the Masters of the Universe) twin sister Adora, who was stolen from her family as a child and raised to be a soldier and a force captain in another universe, where occupational force called the Horde holds absolute rule over a land called Etheria (The Sword of She-Ra Episode 1: Into Etheria). However, Adora soon learns that the Horde's violent ways of occupation and defects, turning to the side of the Great Rebellion, a guerrilla force that resides a forest called the Whispering Woods and resists Horde's occupation (The Sword of She-Ra Episode 2: Beast Island).

The general structure of the show is that each episode is self-contained, but still part of the general story and conflict; the audience may watch one episode and not be confused, as the base conflict is explained to them in intro sequence of every episode. However, any bigger build-up towards climax, such as what series finale might be, does not appear and most of the episodes are disjointed and do

not directly continue each other, expect for the first five episodes that function as an explanation how the story relates to the He-Man universe.

The main villain of the series is called Hordak, the leader of the Horde. He will be the focus of the analysis; his design, mannerism, character arch and manifestation in the world of the series will be examined and compared with his adaptation from the new reboot series, *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power* (2018).

2.2 She-Ra and the Princesses of Power (2018)

She-Ra and the Princesses of Power, a reboot of the 1985's original series premiered on Netflix on November 13, 2018 and is currently ongoing during the writing of this thesis. The new series takes largely after the original show with the cast of characters and the overall nature of the plot and the conflict taking place within the story, but features entirely new writing and animation team; the creators of the original 1985 series have reported that they have not been consulted on production (Straczynski, 2018). Consequently, the new series is not a re-animated version of the older series, but an entirely new take on the characters and the setting that draws inspiration from the older series with many new choices regarding the story and the characters.

The writers of the reboot have taken more linear approach regarding the structure of the story than the writers of the 1985 original series, who preferred to write self-contained episodes. Although most episodes of the reboot have their own secondary plot, the overall story develops gradually with each episode adding to it; characters change based on their experiences and the viewers may be confused if they were to watch one episode at random. Reasons for this may not only be the choices of the new writing team, however, but their publishing platform; the whole series appears season by season in a streaming service instead of television. If viewer begins watching the series, they have access to all of the episodes available thus far, unlike the original series that aired on television, making it so that the viewers back then had no immediate access to all of the episodes, and consequently could not be introduced to the plot by starting the series from the beginning anytime they wished.

The main villain Hordak reappears in the new series in his original role as the main villain, but he has gone through changes in both design and story to suit the vision the new writers. These changes will be analysed with reference to character theory and affect control theory.

3 Theoretical and methodological frameworks

This section details the background work done for the foundation of the analysis, such as theories used to support the analysis as well as explanations to terms used and any meaningful history of these terms.

3.1 The Character theory

To support the analysis and the comparison of the main villain in the original series as well as the reboot, the character theory is going to be used. Kelly Bergstrand and James M. Jasper introduce the character theory in their article as follows

A theory of moral characters has developed in recent years out of cultural analyses of politics and protest... Much of its analysis is of visual images of characters (Bonnell 1997).

Character theory (CT) uses two basic dimensions to define characters traditionally found in literature... The first is moral quality as shown through good or bad intentions and actions. The second dimension concerns power, separating those who are relatively weak or ineffectual from those who can get things done (Bergstrand, K. & Jasper, J. M., 2018, p. 230).

These two dimension mentioned, actions and power, will thus be considered when beginning the analysis of the main villain character in the She-Ra series: how the villain acts, what power he possesses and how this power manifests in the series. While Bergstrand and Jasper largely focus on the political application of the character theory, they do detail that it is traditionally derived from literature and is applicable in fiction, and in this case, fiction that handles topics such as war and protest. Character theory is going to be used for analysis of the visuals around the main villain Hordak, as well as how his intentions and actions are shown through the medium, in addition to the amount of power he is presented with. This kind of analysis might come useful in uncovering what kind of villain the show writers want to make him out to be, and how they achieve this. The theory also presents a simple framework of three known character archetypes, villain, victim, and hero that will be detailed in another section. To support CT analysis, affect control theory is going to be applied alongside it.

3.2 The Affect control theory

Bergstrand and Jasper describe affect control theory and its relation to the character theory as follows.

If CT identifies main characters in political rhetoric, affect control theory explains why characters resonate with audiences. ACT describes the processes through which cultural perceptions of identities, behaviours, settings, and other concepts affect people's thoughts, emotions, and actions. As a branch of symbolic interactionism ACT assumes that we bring expectations to a situation but then also react to what happens... Like character theory, ACT draws on expectations of goodness and power to define identities but adds the dimension of how active or passive identities may be (Bergstrand, K. & Jasper, J. M., 2018, p. 233).

This theory is going to be applied in the thesis with understanding that while character theory will support visual and behavioural analysis of the main villain, the affect control theory supports opening the topic of how these visuals and behaviour make the audience feel about the character; what kind of emotional response the visuals and the character behaviours are designed to draw from the viewers. Applied into this thesis, Hordak's visual appearance as well as his presented actions and power will be analysed in regards to character theory to determine what kind of archetypal, or even stereotypical villain qualities he possesses or does not possess, and affect control theory is referenced upon explaining what feelings and reactions these qualities may evoke in the audience as they see the character on screen.

3.3 Villain, victim, and hero triad

Bergstrand and Jasper also introduce important character archetype triad with the character theory that may be applied to support analysis of a fictive work where war and conflict are one of the central themes.

Diverse genres such as myth, fiction, advertising, and politics offer familiar characters, especially the villain, victim and hero. (Clément, Lindemann, and Sangar 2017). Villains focus blame, provide a clear target for action, intensify negative emotions, and solidify group identities. A correctly cast victim – good, innocent, in need of protection – can also motivate action and encourage recruitment to a cause; it can help increase perceptions that particular

problem is an injustice worth combatting. Heroes form a rallying point, increase agreement among members, and boost commitment to a cause. Villain-victim-hero is the “essential triad” of protest, mobilization for war, constructing social problems, and many other instances of political oratory (Jasper et al. 2018). Minions – malevolent but weak – are less central, but they are useful tropes for ridiculing opponents (Bergstrand, K. & Jasper, J. M., 2018, p. 229).

The villain, victim and hero are all recognisable character roles in the world of fiction, and it is worthwhile to identify the importance of these roles and their interplay with each other when analysing a villain character within a story of this nature; both old and new She-Ra series have core conflict within the subjects of war and protest and can be expected to have characters that may be categorised into these roles, and thus the triad is useful to reference during the analysis. However, because the roles in the triad are described as highly simplified and even stereotypical in the character theory, it is also important to note that some of the more multidimensional characters will not strictly adhere to these descriptions. In these cases, it will be recognised that the character cannot be categorised in such manner and the analysis will have added depth when discussing why the categories may not work in that case.

3.4 History of the term “villain” and the significance of “us” and “them” rhetoric in villainy

The history for the term villain is also important to note when considering the “us” and “them” factor that goes into differentiating heroes and villains for the audience in animated fiction. Social anthropology studies show that people are inclined to find binary oppositions in a way that categories such as good and bad overlapping cause unsatisfactory feelings and lead to certain yearning to be able to define meanings of virtue in form of hero characters, as well as meanings of amoral behaviours in forms of villain characters (Kendrick, 2016, p. 238). Despite this not being strictly true on many of the people, it is useful notation to keep in mind when discussing the history of the word “villain”. The word was originally derived from Latin word “villanus” that used to describe rural labourer, or a slave who worked on one of the large farms known as “villas” in ancient Italy (2016, p. 2), so it is apparent that originally the word villain did not denote a malicious person, but instead it was socially segregating in its nature. During the Middle Ages, villanus took the form “vilein” or “villain” and was assimilated to be used to designate “a low-born rustic” (Kedrick, 2016, p. 2), furthering the connotations at allude to certain reprehension from people from other social

statuses. Kendrick writes this out in their book: “because these people were unbounded by the accepted codes of gentlemanly conduct, [term “villain”] also became moniker for any unprincipled or depraved scoundrel who was naturally disposed to base or criminal actions, or deeply involved in the commission of disgraceful crimes” (2016, p. 2). In other words, it can be deduced that the term villain has long been used in English language as a “line drawing word,” i.e., as a signifier for “others” who are deemed undesirable or dangerous; individuals who spread discord and disorder; and people who are chronic criminals (Kedrick, 2016, p. 3). Naturally, as the term was adapted into the world of myth and fiction, heroes became “us” to the audience and villains became “them”, something or someone who is not with “us”.

3.5 Antagonist versus villain

There is a need to differentiate the terms antagonist and villain. Despite being often applicable to a same character, they are not synonyms of each other. Merriam-Webster describes antagonist as “one that contends with or opposes another: adversary, opponent” (“Antagonist.” *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/antagonist>. Accessed 10 Apr. 2020). In fiction, antagonist is the opposing character to a protagonist, and the protagonist is not always the hero of the story. The term villain is described as “a character in a story or play who opposes the hero” (“Villain.” *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/villain>. Accessed 10 Apr. 2020). It can be taken from this that describing the character as a villain usually comes with a certain presumption that the character in question is antagonistic to a character who fills the role of a hero, a title with positive connotations. However, it is important to note that even a character that is antagonist to a hero is not villain in all cases; rivalry and many other forms of conflict exist and a character being antagonistic towards a hero character does not equate that character to a villain. Villain is additionally defined as “a deliberate scoundrel or criminal” in Merriam-Webster, which adds to the presumption that character that is described as a villain is amoral in some way. Villain in this thesis is used as a term to describe a character that the audience generally understands as a character who is amoral and causes injustice the heroes want to correct. Terminology aside, it should be remembered that moral alignments are always a subjective topic in fiction.

3.6 Social expectations and television entertainment in the 1980s

The analysis begins with a hypothesis, that the adaptation of the main villain from the original She-Ra into the new reboot exemplifies a change in social expectations and trends on fictive media, especially regarding the media targeted towards all age's audience. The 1985 original may be compared with another toy-line centric franchise from around the same time: *Action Force*, or *G. I. Joe*, a toy line that also has comics and animation series centred around it. The franchise features rather clearly defined "good guys" and the "bad guys". This is significant as it has been studied that children classify "the good guys" as characters displaying helpful behaviours, and additionally that adolescents utilize domains of behaviour to characterize heroes (polite, helpful, with martial expertise) from villains (gambling, drinking, starting fights, robbing banks) in popular westerns (Eden, A., Oliver, M. B., Tamborini, R., Limperos, A., & Woolley, J., 2015, p. 189). While these descriptions do not fit nearly all of the characters that can be seen in animated series at the time, they are somewhat plausible suggestion on what kind of qualities children might look for when they classify characters either as good or bad. It can be assumed this kind of classification tendency in children has been considered upon production in franchises like this and many writers, such as writers of *Action Force*, have chosen to not expand upon these ideas. The characters in the franchise do not go through extensive character arcs more than they represent certain ideas that the children are supposed to think as either a good or a bad example.

3.7 Social expectations and television entertainment in the 2010s

As comparable recently produced cartoon, one could mention *Steven Universe*, an animation series created by Rebecca Sugar that ran from 2013 to 2019. This animation series is not based on a toy line, but the merchandise is more of an afterthought that complements the series than other way around. What the viewer may see while watching this series is that relativism in morality becomes much more apparent than in an older series like *Action Force*; much of the conflict focuses on the supposed "good guys" being morally ambivalent and making problematic decisions which continue to affect them and their interplay throughout the series. The characters also have rather spelled out mental health problems and emotional struggles that are not portrayed as scary, but something that can be worked on. Notably, most if not all antagonists and villains of the series see some sort of redemption in the end; even the "monster of the week" type encounters in the beginning of the

series are redeemed and a lot of attention is drawn on these redemptions. The show seems like rather clear statement about the concept of villainy and how characters may change, something not so often seen during the 1980's. It may be hypothesised that the new She-Ra series may also follow similar changes to social expectations; more emphasis on continuous story and character development instead of the action, possibly indicating that it is a contemporary idea to introduce more emotionally heavy topics in children's media, as well as ideas of relativism regarding morality of "good guys" and "bad guys" that come to overshadow the action scenes the older cartoons may be remembered from.

3.8 Definitions for the concept of evilness

Especially in mythology, the concept of good versus evil has been archetypal struggle (Garry J. & El-Shamy, H.M., 2005, p. 458). Evil has been philosophical and ethnical concern throughout time and its exact definition is not established, but Garry and El-Shamy quote at least two definitions for the concept of evil in their book: "evil is simply the difference between the way one wishes the world to be and the way the world is" and "evil appears antithetical to the reverence for life, antagonistic to the development of human potential, and opposed to divine or temporal principles of order" (2005, p. 458). These are both rather philosophical definitions, but the second definition offers potential basis for core idea of evil, and by extension, villain: something opposed to what is considered good. It is beneficial to remember the remark about human potential as well as the investigation moves on to analyse and compare the character development in the two series, or deliberate lack of thereof.

3.9 Mythological origins of the villain and its influence on animated series

Many folktales depict the earliest instances of good versus evil, and scholars have noted how some depictions tend to be simplistic polarity between good and evil on the level of both plot and the characters; as an example, widespread European folktale *The Dragon Slayer* is mentioned, where a hero rescues princess from a wicked dragon (Garry & El-Shamy, 2005, p. 461). Despite the world literature offering a variety of character archetypes that go beyond the simple dichotomy of benevolent good versus wicked evil, many who have heard folktales such as *The Dragon Slayer* might recognise this kind of simplification emerging at times. This is something to be remembered when considering children's media, where characters may often represent simple ideas such as goodness

and evilness, many times with intention of setting examples and teaching something; many folktales have the tendency to have some moral teaching as well. In other words, the idea that the characters tend to be altogether good or altogether bad with little to no evolution of character is not a novel idea, but something that has been seen throughout the times (Garry & El-Shamy, 2005). Not the most prevalent, but every so often seen type of villain that folktales depict is a personification of evil, often depicted in form of a wicked stepmother, an ogre, a witch, a troll or other character whose main purpose is to be defeated by heroes in order for the happy ending to be achieved (Garry & El-Shamy, 2005, p.461). This kind of tradition will be considered in reference to depiction of villains in the two She-Ra series.

4 The analysis

This section consists of the analysis on the material. With special attention placed on the depiction of villains, the two series are studied, and observations made both from visual and narrative standpoints.

4.1 Visual analysis of 1985 series Hordak

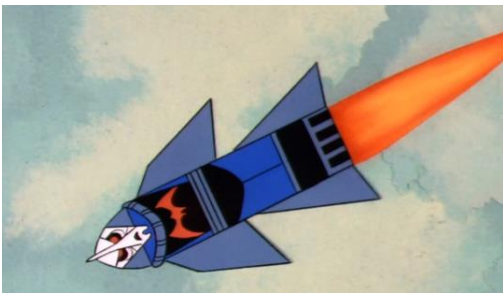
The analysis begins from the visual aspects of the villain design; the visual image essentializes the character in a way we should be able to sum the character up with just a glance (Bergstrand & Jasper, 2018). As the viewer sees Hordak appear on the show, multiple visual cues in his design give clear indications of his role in the story. His design is very readable for his intended role; he has a clear colour scheme, dark blue and black with a hint of red and white for contrast, where dark hues of his body makes his pale, white face stand out in a way that the viewers' attention is instantly drawn to it. Not only do the permanent frown and details of his face stand out because of the white colour choice, it also draws similarities to horror motifs such as skeletons and a pale, dead bodies. Fully red eyes, sharp red teeth and pointy ears finish the facial design, placing him further away from humanity towards something closer to a monster. Going back to some early folktale depictions of villains, clear inspiration drawn from concepts of mythological trolls and ogres can be seen. The dark overall colour choices



1. Hordak as he appears in "She-Ra: Princess of power" (1985)

on his body differentiate him from the cast of heroes who wear bright colours, especially the main hero, Adora, who in her She-Ra form wears striking white and gold hues, consolidating the “otherness” of Hordak in comparison. Considering the origins of the term villain, it can be deduced that these design choices are most probably present to serve this “othering” in order to clearly set Hordak apart from the “good guys” and leave no mistake that he is the villain of this story from the very first glance, as per affect control theory; seeing these aspects of Hordak’s design are meaningfully installed to make sure viewers only need one look to see Hordak as something other than them as well as something to be feared and hated.

Hordak’s clothes likewise read towards the role he takes and the motifs he has; high collar made of metallic bone-shapes point towards ruthless warlord and also reflect his capabilities in the universe of the series: Hordak in the original series is shown to have the ability to turn parts of his body to firearms, such as cannons, and even have an ability to fully transform his whole body into a rocket



2. Hordak (1985) transformed into a rocket

(The Sword of She-Ra Episode 4: Reunions). An ability to change his body in this manner might be for the reason of linking him to war and conflict as a concept; as war as a concept is supposedly villainous (Coker C., 2014, p.127) and villainy breeds and festers in the environment that war produces (2014, p.128). While the heroes of the story are

shown to have no metallic additions to their designs and to use mainly magic or primitive weapons such as bows and arrows, Hordak’s ability to turn himself into very modern war weaponry is a stark indication towards both his connection to war as well as the gravity of threat he presents towards the heroes. This kind of dichotomy between old or even fantastical weaponry and newer modern warfare might be in place to highlight the bravery of the heroes as they are shown to be able to combat against all the technology Hordak has access to, perhaps as a message for the children to tell them that if there is a will, there is a way. The prevalent use of magic from the heroes side contrasted to Hordak’s use of war machines might also symbolise the struggle to maintain positivity and being able to dream in a world full of anxieties such as the threat of a war. Heroes’ use of primitive warfare such as bows and arrows might be to romanticise humble nature and hard work, while villains association with modern weaponry might be to vilify the idea of the need for control over the environment and the many means that are employed to establish this control, such as

machines of war, as well as the ease of effort that the villains have when using these destructive machines.

4.2 Visual analysis of 2018 series Hordak

Hordak's design was altered in the modern reboot of the series in order to fit into the vision of the new writing and animation team. Some concepts of the 1985's design have been adapted quite faithfully, such as the white colour of his face being the attention drawing part of him completed with the red eyes, facial details and pointy ears. The high collar has also been retained, but design has changed into more sleek form, completed with long purple cape to signify status and newfound sophistication that is not employed in



3. Hordak as he appears in "She-Ra and the Princesses of power" (2018)

the 1985 design; this version of Hordak is much less comparable for a mythological monster such as ogre or a troll. Still, the design gives out information with different implications. While he is no longer a brute looking villain, he is instead seeming calculative and cold leader who works with an intent. The design choice is also compensated with surprisingly long build-up to the revelation of the main villain. Unlike in the 1985 series where Hordak was one of the first



4. Hordak's first appearance in "She-Ra and the Princesses of power" (2018), episode 3, "Razz"

characters to appear on screen, the new series withholds his appearance for three episodes during which he is only mentioned by name in contexts that give the viewer an idea of his power over the rest of the cast; in the first episode, "The Sword, Part 1", one of his henchmen reference him while talking to the main character Adora about a promotion to a force captain, as at this point she has not yet defected. Adora reacts with surprise and flatter, making it clear how relieving and honourable it is to receive such a title from Hordak. When the viewer finally sees Hordak in the third episode, "Razz" he is shown as an eerie silhouette with only brief view of his face. This choice to build up towards his revelation can

well be assumed to serve specific purpose: as per character theory, to present villain as both powerful and secretive heightens the urgency to see them defeated. (Bergstrand & Jasper, 2018, p. 231). It is apparent that the build-up as well as the final design were planned to have more impact upon revelation, but as per affect control theory, it is still very evident to the viewer that Hordak is the main villain and very capable of evil acts one may expect from a character that has this kind of appearance. However, it should be noted that Hordak's design changes during the new series with purpose to affect viewers disposition towards him as a character.

Hordak's design changes in the reboot series is significant to note as it is something Hordak in the original series is not shown doing as he instead appears the same throughout the series, expect for when he uses his ability to turn into weaponry. In the 22nd overall episode "Huntara", the viewers see Hordak without his armour that he has been using throughout the series until this point; this reveals weak and



5. Hordak in the 22nd overall episode "Huntara", shown without his armour

emaciated body, appearance supported by visible exhaustion Hordak shows while being without his armour. This is the first time in the series the design of the main villain is evidently used to create sympathy for the character; Hordak's state of weakness without his armour is not played out as a joke, but something shocking after the viewer has only been shown his armoured design, often in threatening and powerful context. As per affect control theory, the revelation may be by design in order to introduce more humane side to the villain as someone who is not all encompassing and powerful but someone who has to compensate for his physical weakness with machinery. Comparing him with his original version, who is constantly in state of power with build-in ability to modify his body, one may note how the new Hordak is lacking in this front; his mechanical compensations must be build and installed. This fact is shown again in the later episodes, when Hordak builds himself an arm-cannon, something rather iconic from the 1985 series, but this cannon is later destroyed during a fight with one of his deceitful subordinates (Episode 39, Destiny, Part 2). It can be deduced that this use of design is also meaningful decision from the writing teams' part to starkly visualise how less empowered the rebooted version of Hordak is compared to his original appearance in 1985.

Soon after the viewer is introduced to the physical weakness the main villain has been hiding during the series, there is another design change to arouse sympathy and bring humanity into the character; Hordak receives a new armour from one of the princesses named Entrapta. The significance of this is that Entrapta in the reboot series begins as one of the heroes, or “the good guys”, but later changes sides due to misunderstanding, whereas her original version is a villain who is with the Horde from the beginning of the series. Because of the misunderstanding, she is not shown in plainly antagonistic way and the viewer is likely to still see her as a one of the heroes. She develops a peculiar friendship with Hordak while working as his technician; something very unheard of from the original Hordak, who is not shown to have particularly intimate relationship with anyone. The significance of the armour Hordak receives from this character can be firstly seen from the removal of the high collar and the cape; as per character theory, it may be read as a sign of ruthless power Hordak was introduced with, as well as something that enforces his position as a leader and a threat. The removal of this part of his new design is something writers may have introduced in order to build further sympathy for the character, as per affect control theory, the removal of something that symbolises power may cause the audience not think of him as someone high ranking and powerful at a glance. Finally, the new armour has tiny purple gemstone above the chest piece that bears the dominating colour from Entrapta’s colour scheme, which is something that may indicate her influence on him. Showing another character’s positive influence on the villain with design choice like this further implies the writers’ intention to display the characters humanity despite his position as the main villain; it goes to show that despite everything, this character is still a person outside of his role and has a capability to change.



6. Hordak with his new armour in 22nd overall episode, "Huntara", along with Entrapta (left) and a minion, Imp (right)

4.3 Hordak's manifestation in the 1985 series

In addition to having meaningfully put-together design in his own right, Hordak in *She-Ra: Princess of power* also manifests in the space he inhabits and rules over in several ways that go to show how extensive his power is and why he is a force to be reckoned with.

Hordak resides in certain area with his forces that is designed in a way the viewer is instantly informed about the amount of power Hordak holds in it; the area is named the *Fright zone*, which



7. The Fright zone as it appears in "The sword of She-Ra, episode 1: Into Etheria"

by itself is rather clear indication how viewer is expected to feel about it as per affect control theory; a scary place one does not want to find themselves in. Whenever the scene moves into Fright zone, the viewer is shown a pan-over of a gloomy city with various sharp angles, accompanied by constant sound of machines. Most significant, however, is how the whole area bears Hordak's colour scheme

of dark blues with bright red highlights, something

that very distinctly connects him to the region and lets the viewer know that he holds the most power in there. The area around the Fright zone is also shown to be desolate and without life, as well as the sky is shown to be dark and full of smoke. This kind of gloomy imagery very plainly spells out that this is where the main villain resides. By comparison, the area where the heroes reside, the Whispering woods, is shown to be a beautiful forest coloured with bright pastel colours with clear sky over it, an unambiguous opposite of how Fright zone is presented; as something one could think as industrial version of hell. This is most certainly to further the stark "us" and "them" division between the heroes and the villains.



8. The Whispering woods as it appears in "The Sword of She-Ra, episode 1: Into Etheria"

Hordak does not only manifest strongly in the area he inhabits, but also in his subordinates and the machinery in their disposal. Most numerous of Hordak's minions are the Horde troopers, an army of identical robots with tall, bulky, and fully metallic appearance, topped with pair of frowning eyes that glow when they speak and Hordak's insignia on their chest pieces. The Horde troopers are shown to constantly terrorise the civilians of Etheria for their own amusement by the very first moment they are introduced (*The Sword of She-Ra*, episode 1: *Into Etheria*). This way Hordak's power manifests in his minions as both tools of fear as well



9. Three Horde troopers in "*The Sword of She-Ra*, episode 1: *Into Etheria*"

as fearful victims themselves, as Hordak is also shown to dispose and torture his minions for his own amusement, for example by activating trap doors under them as they are addressing him in his throne room, for an example in episode 63, "Flowers for Hordak". However, these scenes are most often played out in humorous manner without much sympathy being aroused towards the troopers, for the example by melancholy music design or lingering camera shots. These minions are shown to be rather weak as a single unit and only strong when in masses or when lead by the main villain, as per assumption of character theory (Bergstrand & Jasper 2018, p. 232). It is likely that they have been made into robots in order to enable more dramatic action scenes as the heroes defeat them, as breaking down a robot is less graphic and violent than severely beating a real person wearing a suit of armour. This also creates emotional distance to the troopers themselves and add to the idea that they are Hordak's manifestations.

The minions also consist of multiple visually unique characters with individual names, such as Catra and Mantenna. Their designs and abilities vary due to the diversity offered in the toys the series is based on, such as Catra's ability to turn into a panther. They do not conform to the broad description of a minion in character theory the same way Horde troopers do, as they are treated as considerably threatening and empowered as singular unities, but they are rarely shown to have their own agendas outside of Horde's general operations. Their spare time in the Fright zone is shown to mainly consist terrorising the captives and plotting malicious plans against the heroes (Episode 11, *The Peril of Whispering Woods*), a stark contrast to how heroes are often depicted doing mundane everyday things or having fun amongst each other before they have to address a new trouble

created by the villains. Thus, even the visually unique minions are mostly present as extensions of Hordak's power, although with some unique qualities.

In addition, the Horde has many machines and vehicles in its disposal, and what is noticeable is that most of them bear some resemblance to Hordak himself, often having his facial features incorporated into their designs in some way, as well as the blue hues of his colour scheme. This goes to further deepen the manifestation of power Hordak has, as the viewer is constantly reminded of his presence and firepower through the display of this machinery even when he himself is not on screen. Notably, these machines mostly consist of modern warfare vehicles, such as tanks and fighter



10. Horde tank seen in episode 11, "The Peril of Whispering Woods"

jets, further associating Hordak with war as a villainous concept. Finally, this kind of use of minions and machinery can be used to very fittingly describe Hordak as a technocrat villain; emperor, or a dark lord, who does their dirty work by using and abusing technology such as minions, army and weapons to do his bidding (Perks, L. G, 2014, p. 101). This kind of trope has long tradition behind it with many examples, such as in Saruman in Lord of the Rings or Darth Vader in Star Wars saga. As quoted in Media Marathoning: Immersions in morality, a technocrat villain helps the audience to come to terms with the horror of palpable evil revealed in modern, global warfare (2014, p. 101). Hordak's own transformation abilities, his machinery as well as the absolute uniformity of the Horde troopers makes Hordak ideal example of the technocrat villain trope and also deepens the contrast with the heroes with their magic and primitive weapons; beauty of the things that are engineered by nature or by hand is highlighted next to ugly and grotesque machinery (Perks, 2014, p. 106), which is a fitting description in this case.

In reference to villain-victim-hero triad, it is important to analyse how the victims of Hordak's villainy are presented in the 1985 show. According to the character theory, we feel warmly enough toward victims to want to aid them since are too weak to save themselves, and victims have long been a staple of research into the construction of social problems and protest rhetoric (Bergstrand & Jasper, 2018, p.232), which suits the general plot of She-Ra: The



11. A Horde trooper overseeing a slave march in "Sword of She-Ra, episode 2: Beast island"

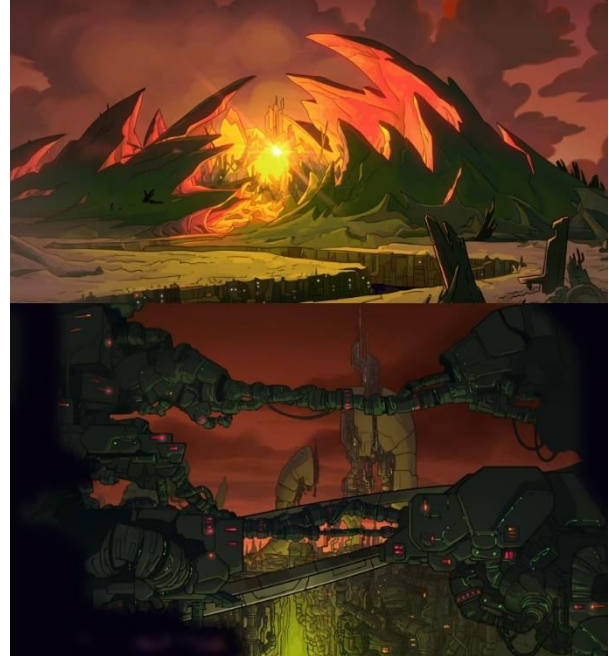
Princess of Power, where protest is very central theme. As the viewer begins watching the show, they may notice that the victims are presented in the very first intro sequence as marching slaves. With ragged and civilian looking designs, it is immediately made clear that these victims cannot save themselves and need aid from the heroes; they are ordinary people with no power in a situation they do not deserve but cannot get out of. This way of presentation also effectively underlines the injustice of the villains, who are empowered and often given designs that place them visually further away from ordinary humans. As per character theory, the most sympathetic victims are good and powerless, someone who audience pities and wants to help (Bergstrand & Jasper, 2018, 232), and this often comes true in the series when depicting Horde's injustices through the civilian victims. It also must be noted that the word *slave* is used a lot when Hordak or his minions address the victims, so much that the usage of the word is almost oversaturated. It may be deduced that the word is repeated to reinforce the injustice taking place, as most children understand the negative connotations with the word. In addition to collecting slaves, the Horde is also seen destroying civilian homes with fighter jets (Sword of She-Ra, episode 2: Beast island), using civilians in experiments (The Sword of She-Ra, episode 3: She-Ra Unchained) and keeping them prisoners to provide entertainment for the higher ranking Horde personnel (Episode 11, The Peril of Whispering woods) among others.

On the other hand, Hordak's minions may also be considered his victims in a way, as again, the audience is shown how Hordak regularly punishes them for failures or even purely for his own entertainment, for instance in episode 13, "King Miro's Journey". However, this kind of victimhood is not underlined by the show writers in the same way the victimhood of the civilians is, as Hordak disciplining his minions is mostly shown as humorous, without emphasis on the minion's inability to defend themselves against him as something distressing or unfair. Once again, most sympathetic, or at least, most recognisable victims are often created through goodness and powerlessness, and because the minions are bad and, compared to civilians, empowered, watching them suffer in the hands of their leader is portrayed as somewhat tragicomic at worst.

4.4 Hordak's manifestation in 2018 series

In this section, the rebooted version of the show is analysed through same points as the 1985 show to compare the realisation of villainy in them.

Like the original 1985 series, Hordak's area of occupation is called the Fright zone. However, as the viewer begins watching the series, they are not immediately being informed about the connection of the area and its leader, as at this point, the main villain has not yet appeared. Interesting detail is that in this show, the audience is not even being hinted towards Hordak by, for instance, using his colour scheme on the entirety of Fright zone as it is in the original show. Instead of dark blues with red highlights, the dominating colour of the area is earthy shades of green, a colour that is not used in any of the main casts colour schemes, thus not



12. Fright zone as seen in the episode 1, "The Sword, part 1"

linking the area to anyone visually. Red highlights, mechanical sharp angles and the sounds of machines have been retained however, as well as the dark cloudy sky, which still works to indicate that the area is sinister and home to something of a hidden evil, perhaps. The desolate wasteland surrounding the Fright zone is also something to note, as the villainy against nature remains one of the themes in the new show.

In turn, analysing the new take on the minions, the first thing to notate about them is that steps have been taken by the writing team to individualise the Horde troopers; they are no longer robots, as well as they are no longer shown to go out in public to terrorise civilians outside of the war efforts. Their armours feature horde insignia as well as anonymity granting helmets, but visually they are shown to have different body types and qualities depending on their race, such as lizard tails.



13. Horde troopers seen in the episode 2, "The Sword, part 2"

The colour scheme of the troopers matches the Fright zone with greyish green hues, but not Hordak himself specifically; a certain distance with them and him has been created with this choice. The viewer does not instantly think of Hordak when they see the troopers, which is noteworthy. However, they are still displayed to be threatening only in masses and rarely individually, as per assumption of character theory.

One of the bigger changes to further demonstrate the individuality and by extension, humanity



14. Horde troopers discussing a lost battle in the episode 4, "Flowers for She-Ra". Note one of the troopers mending injuries of the other trooper

through the troopers is that viewers can see them post-combat, talking about their experiences among themselves and mending their injuries in a manner that is not designed to seem humorous or create a feeling of triumph towards the heroes. Remarkably, some of these troopers are confirmed to be rather young, being addressed as cadets and acting like teenagers with their body language and

manner of talk. They also seem to have their talking sessions in a room that seems a lot like college changing room, and some of them are named on screen. Perhaps this is a way to make younger viewers connect with the troopers on some level by showing them that they are not merely extensions of the main villain's power, but people who only work under him and have friendships among each other, and may not know better about the immorality of their actions, especially if they have been in the force from a young age. The absolute uniformity of the troopers that the writers of the original She-Ra preferred is no longer present in the reboot, and these details seem to be there for the viewer to understand that even the minions are individuals and most likely misguided from young age.

Hordes machinery retains its modern warfare qualities in forms of tanks and ships, with some more



15. Horde tank as seen in episode 2 "The Sword, part 2"

fantasy-themed additions such as flying boats called skiffs (Episode 1, The Sword, part 1), but the fighter jets are not seen in the reboot. Horde still employs robots as well, but they now take spherical form instead of humanoid form and do not talk, clearly setting them apart from the troopers who are now shown to be people in armours. Notably, the machinery is similarly lacking Hordak's colour schemes and his facial features

are not part of the designs anymore. The colourations vary from green to brown depending on the lighting of the scene, and this kind of choice further distances Hordak's personal touch to his army. However, it is shown that Horde is still more technologically advanced than the rebellion and the idea of control that comes with the theme is spelled out, as well as the connotations to the technocrat villain trope. Upon seeing destruction caused by Horde machinery in the Whispering woods, a character named Razz tells the main character Adora: "It is the same old story, dearie. Wicked people destroy what they cannot control" (Episode 3, Razz). It is to be noted that Hordak is not named as the main perpetrator here, which is something that is done a lot in the original series when heroes address the destruction Horde has created; the themes are present, but Hordak does not necessarily manifest as the main evil behind them.

What comes to the unique, more reoccurring minions from the original show, the viewer sees that many of them are missing in the reboot; characters like Mantenna and other often-seen minions are nowhere to be seen in the rebooted show. Some are retained however, for instance characters such as Catra and Scorpia. These characters were given new designs, and notably, their emotional struggles in the Horde are now given equal attention along with the heroes. Much of the series shows Catra dealing with feelings of abandonment after the main character Adora defects, as well as Scorpia's struggle to gain friendship with Catra, which eventually leads into her defecting as well due to her own complicated feelings (episode 32, Princess Scorpia). To summarise, the characters have the emotional depth and humanity that was chosen to be left out in the original series, and their desires now consist something else than causing torment for the good people. This also leads

into a conclusion that in the reboot, these minions are less of an extension of Hordak's power, but more like their own characters with arcs that have purpose within the plot, separated from him.

The victimhood has become somewhat more convoluted matter in the reboot series. The audience is still shown civilian suffering through destroyed villages and even on-screen takeovers where the civilians run in fear as Horde tanks run over the buildings, showing the wrong that must be righted, similarly to the original. However, the oversaturation of slavery as a concept has been removed in this new take of the story, and we are not shown,



16. Destroyed village after Horde attack (Episode 1, *The Sword*, part 1)

for an example, how Horde troopers interact with civilians personally. The characters are also shown talking about the trauma the war has caused; a supporting character named Bow tells Adora, who has only recently defected, why the people must not see her in her Horde uniform by saying the following: "The people of Bright Moon have really been hurt by the Horde. Everyone here has lost someone in the war" (Episode 3, Razz). The melancholic musical design of the scene as well as hushed voice acting lets on that this is something to be taken seriously. The concept of civilian victimhood is present but is perhaps handled more delicately through implications and less with actively showing the destruction being made, although scenes like that do have their places in the new series as well.

The victimhood of Hordak's subordinates becomes an interesting topic while examining the new series. Hordak does not discipline his minions in the same manner as he does in the original series: for his own entertainment or in a fit of sudden rage. This change is highlighted in the very first scene Hordak is revealed in person; a higher-ranking subordinate Shadow weaver brings terrified cadet Catra to Hordak to be punished for failing a mission. Hordak does not end up punishing Catra, but instead coldly scolds Shadow weaver for not conditioning Catra for the task properly and in the end of the scene, promotes Catra to a force captain in order to continue Horde operations as normal (Episode 3, Razz). Here, the audience is shown that Hordak's mannerism and motivations have drastically changed from his original version, and there are narrative reasons for that.

4.5 Hordak's mannerism in 1985 series

Hordak's nature becomes apparent for the viewer from the first minutes of *She-Ra: Princess of power*. He is shown holding a baby while laughing manically and promising that the heroes he is addressing will never see the child again before shooting at them and escaping through a portal (The Sword of She-Ra Episode 1: Into Etheria). Even prior to this scene, the intro sequence details the nature of the conflict rather clearly, and especially what role Hordak has in the series: "Where hope seems lost, there rises the rebellion. Together they stand ready against the dark, evil warriors of the Horde, and their leader, the terrible Hordak", followed by Hordak stepping forward and firing his arm cannon towards the camera (The Sword of She-Ra Episode 1: Into Etheria). From this moment, viewer gets quite clear understanding of what to expect from the character. Later in the same episode, this idea is strengthened when Hordak is shown being addressed by his subordinates. He speaks with loud and raspy voice that almost sounds like constant shouting at places, snorts occasionally like a pig as he talks and bursts into manic fits of laughter at the end. The most important note the viewer can make is that Hordak addresses himself and his troops as evil from the very beginning: "It is not nice to cause trouble for the evil Horde" (The Sword of She-Ra Episode 1: Into Etheria). He also shows pride over his evil nature on multiple occasions, such as when he persuades another villain called Skeletor to help him forward his scheme: "You know Skeletor, your evil is almost a match for my own. Together we will make life miserable for those Eternian fools" (The Sword of She-Ra Episode 4: Reunions). This displays how aware Hordak is of his role in the story on very concrete level. As the viewer continues to watch the series, they notice that this idea is not developed, but instead remains as something of a status quo throughout the series. Hordak's position as the personification of villainy as a concept is even punctuated by giving him outright aversion towards everything considered good and beautiful, such as dance and flowers, exemplified in 63rd episode, "Flowers for Hordak", where he is shown having a meltdown over captive princess decorating his stronghold with flowers and dancing with his troopers.

With his nature, Hordak in the 1985 series is simultaneously a force to be reckoned with as well as a caricature of his archetype, something one would think children will find both exciting and entertaining, which can be assumed to be the primary purpose of the animated series. However, and adult viewer may see the deeper, symbolic implications in Hordak's character, such as his reoccurring sadism which is often played out as a joke on a surface level.

4.6 Hordak's mannerism in 2018 series

Taking all the other analysis into account, it is apparent from the start that Hordak's position as the main villain has been toned down significantly in the rebooted series. His presence and position as the main evil is no longer made obvious, but instead something the viewer is eased in with implications rather than visual cues and clear statements. As mentioned, his new mannerism fits with the new, sleeker, and more sophisticated design he has given. As he usually addresses his subordinates in cold, but eerily patient voice, whenever he raises his voice in anger, the moment gets special punctuation and emphasis into it, raising the feeling of threat and urgency. Hordak is even seen whispering threats in order to place special gravity on his words (Episode 4, Flowers for She-Ra) something unseen from the 1985 series Hordak, who always tends to talk loudly. Snorting and manic laughing fits have also been removed from this new take, leaving much more stable but still frightening demeanour to the main villain. It is also to be noted that Hordak is rarely seen on screen for the first half of the series, keeping him at arm's length from the audience for a considerable amount of time. However, as the series progress, the viewers begin seeing more of Hordak, and learning more about him and his past, something that there is seemingly no need for in the 1985 series where his staple role as a villain is more important than the question why he might have become what he is. Most interestingly, this Hordak no longer addresses himself as evil and does not seem to be motivated by the misery of the heroes. That leaves the viewers thinking what does motivate him, but the answer is slow to come as the series progress.

4.6.1 Slow build-up used in developing the main villain in 2018 series

The audience can learn more about Hordak as a character once one of the heroes, Entrapta, begins spending time with him after defecting due to misunderstanding with the other heroes. This begins from the 16th overall episode "Signals" when Entrapta enters Hordak's laboratory and discovers one of his personal projects. Up until this point, Hordak has only been shown briefly every now and then, giving orders to his subordinates, so the viewer can be assumed to feel little about him at this point; there has not been much done to personally pinpoint Hordak as the main evil causing the injustices in the story rather than giving the spotlight to smaller personal struggles the heroes and the minions have amongst each other. Having seen him only coldly address his subordinates and usher them

forwards in the conquering efforts, the viewer may see him as malicious but distant villain at this point.

In “Signals”, the viewer learns that Hordak is from another planet and he is working on a portal device. There is not much explanation offered yet, fitting the slow build-up nature the series has been shown to have, but getting a small hint that Hordak has a personal goal outside of the war efforts may be the writers attempt to indicate that there is more to the character than meets the eye. However, further explanation is not offered until episode 19, “Light spinner”, where in the beginning of the episode, viewer is shown Hordak getting into his armour with a help of a machine that malfunctions and hurts him slightly in the process. The moment lasts only for seconds, but it can be taken as a solid hint towards more information to come. This seems to be deliberate writing choice: giving out information about the main villain slowly with small moments in episodes that are largely about something else might support the build-up of interest towards the character, especially one in such a major role who has not had as much screen time as most of his minions at this point. The secrecy has thus far been the main element in Hordak’s new take in the reboot series.

4.6.2 Hordak’s motivations in 2018 series

The build-up towards the revelation about Hordak’s past ends in the 22nd overall episode “Huntara” when Entrapta discovers secret experiments in Hordak’s laboratory, as well as catches him in a state of weakness while he is removing his armour components, something that has only been shown in small moments in past episodes thus far. Finally cornered with the questions, Hordak reveals his past and present motivations to both Entrapta and the viewers in form of a flashback. Here is when the viewer learns the most significant change in Hordak’s rebooted version; he is not doing what he is doing for himself, but to try to please even higher power, Horde prime, who he has been cloned from and who he addresses as his brother. It is to be noted that Horde prime does exist in the 1985 series as well, but he is never shown and instead only mentioned as someone Hordak answers to every now and then to create humour (For the example in the 11th episode, The Peril of Whispering Woods), similar to how Hordak in the same series treats his subordinates and humour is created from them having to answer to him. In the new version however, the viewers learn that Hordak has once been rejected by Horde prime in the past due to his weak physique, has come to Etheria by a strange accident, and is solely motivated to conquer the planet so he could open a portal to summon

Horde prime and give up the empire in hopes of showing his worth and gaining back his superiors approval (Episode 22, Huntara). It is significant how this motivation is played out: Hordak is shown to battle with insecurities arising from the rejection, and all his sinister plans are shown to be his desperate attempts to mend those insecurities.

This is not played out as a joke, but something the series has thus far been building up to with only small moments with Hordak on screen, and now the viewers finally get to know that the main villain may not be driven by his evil nature and greed, but by a flimsy understanding of a self-



17. Hordak mulling over his failures (Episode 22, Huntara)

worth and desperation. The author of *Media Marathoning: Immersion in Morality* proposes two essential themes that encourage viewers to understand morally ambivalent figures: A sympathetic backstory and acts of redemption. While these aspects are not excusing the characters wrongdoings, they are possible openings for viewer sympathy (Perks, 2014, p. 164), and revealing Hordak's backstory in this manner may definitely be seen as something that could be there to gain him sympathy and give reasons if not excuses to why he is the way he is.

This sequence also shows the audience how Hordak's and Horde prime's interplay differs from the original show; Hordak is not afraid of Horde prime as someone he has to answer to, but is in actuality anxious to get approval from, even when he no longer has any obligations towards him. This is well solidified in Hordak's line at the end of his flashback sequence: "Horde prime will see that he was wrong. I am not a defect. I am worth something" (Episode 22, Huntara).

It is also to be noted that in the very same scene, Hordak is also comforted by the other character, Entrapta, after revealing his past to her. She is shown to build him a new armour that helps him feel empowered and reassures him about his supposed imperfections. This moment of emotional weakness and sincerity to another character is not there by accident; because Hordak's main quality has been secrecy this far, learning this much about him signifies new emotional closeness to the viewer as well. As Hordak has opened to Entrapta, he has opened to the viewer as well and is no longer held at arm's length. This may also read as a subtle act of redemption as Hordak shows weakness to someone for the very first time in the show.

4.6.3 Victimhood of the villain

To return briefly to the villain-victim-hero triad, it must be mentioned how the new series has a lot of instances of intermixing the roles of the triad. As mentioned, Hordak has been shown a little during the first twenty episodes of the series, and this is largely because the true focus of the show has been with other characters and their struggles. Notably, the main hero Adora, unlike in the 1985 series, is not shown to be accepted to the side of the “good guys” as quickly as she is in the original series. A lot of the conflict



18. Hordak pleading for Horde prime's approval (Episode 39, *Destiny*, part 2). Note the camera angle and the emotiveness of the expression

in the beginning revolves around the distrust she suffers, her difficulties to adapt into new life outside of the Horde, as well as her personal struggle to learn to control her power, breaking the perhaps fantastical idea of a flawless hero and the concept that one can instantly turn from bad to good. Similarly, Hordak's status as the main villain comes to being questioned as the series continues when the character he is trying to please, Horde prime, finally appears and interacts with him on



19. Horde prime manhandling Hordak (Episode 39, *Destiny*, part 2)

screen. Hordak is on his knees, injured after a struggle that took place, and Horde prime is shown on a throne before him; this is where Hordak tells him how everything he has done during the series has been for Horde primes benefit and how he longs to be accepted back, always addressing Horde prime as his brother (Episode 39, *Destiny*, part 2). The camera

angles are used to present Hordak as a smaller subordinate, a contrast to how he has been presented as the superior power to be answered to most of the series. The scene ends when Horde prime expresses disapproval of what Hordak has been trying to do and physically disciplines him by lifting him from his neck. The scene ends with Hordak being put into coma by Prime and pushed

aside as someone who needs reconditioning. There is notable difference to the scenes of the 1985 series where Hordak entertains himself by disciplining his subordinates, or when he is reminded that he has to report a failure to Horde prime, as in those scenes, the suffering of the villains is always something displayed as entertaining and something that serves them right, but little in the 2018 series indicate that the audience is expected to approve of Hordak's suffering, lest draw humour out of it; The scene is slow and sombre, until music picks up as Horde prime disciplines Hordak, indicating shock and nearing climax of the scene, that is when Hordak is put into a coma and whisked aside as someone no longer important. This may make the audience question if Hordak was only one of the victims of even greater villain the whole duration of the series, or perhaps a glorified minion.

5 Discussion of the results and conclusion

It is rather clear that vastly different creative approach has been taken in the two series, despite them depicting the same characters in the same conflict in their core. In *She-Ra: Princess of Power* (1985), characters seem to mostly depict simple ideas of morality without a lot of emotional depth; in reference to villain-victim-hero triad, the villains depict the simple ideas of evil, similar to some folktales, where a single character may personify what is undesirable and immoral, the victims depict simple ideas of powerlessness and heroes depict simple ideas of goodness and morality. However, an adult viewer may be able to see deeper meanings within the characters, such as the themes of greed, sadism, and warfare in Hordak's character. These ideas are purposefully not improved on in explicit way as series progresses; each episode has its own smaller plot that at least loosely links into the greater conflict presented, and in every one of these episodes the status quo is the same. This way, a child who opens the television for entertainment may enjoy an episode of the series without having to be aware of what has happened plot-wise in the other episodes, or what kind of development might have taken place. This does not make the older series necessarily shallower than the new, as it was most certainly the writing teams' objective to have the characters represent ideas or ideals symbolically rather than realistically. Each episode serves as some sort of moral teaching for the children, and Hordak in this context is written in agreement of villain description in character theory, someone who is designed into his role as a villain and as per affect control theory, someone whose existence arouses protest and demands action. It is supposed to be clear that he is evil and is not trying to be anything else, and it can be assumed that this was also

one of the media trends of the time of the production. This may also give clear indications about the social expectations at the time of production, especially regarding what kind of content the show writers thought children were expected to want and be able to handle. Perhaps the writers had an idea that their target audience does not need complicated plot or long character arcs, but instead something that can keep them entertained for twenty minutes as well as offer characters they can look up to as idealisations of what they want or do not want to be like. All in all, it was most probably the show writers' vision that their series should consist of multiple small stories in the world of She-Ra rather than one grand story.

In comparison, *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power* (2018) hints at new social expectations and perhaps a change in entertainment culture in addition to the new vision of the new writing team. This series has a plotline where each episode forwards it instead of having a certain status quo with different problems to solve each episode, and the characters, including the main villain, grow with the developing plot. Hordak in this new series is not present only to give the heroes someone to fight against, but as a self-contained character who has been written with his own ambitions and understandings of morality that drive the plot in their own right. He is not an example of pure evil or only a symbolic figure of villainous concepts such as war and sadism more than he is an example of someone who is misguided and as long as he is concerned, a hero of his own story. Considering other contemporary cartoons, this may be a trend as well, albeit perhaps post-modern one; there are rarely villains in archetypal sense anymore, where character is in the story to knowingly act as the evildoer with nothing to explain their amoral nature, but instead misunderstood people who the world has rejected and who have dealt with this rejection negatively. Perhaps this indicates a slight change in social expectations, a thought that children may be able to handle more mature concepts such as the uncertainty of ambivalent morality and the abstract nature of the concepts of good and bad, as well as longer plotlines that lead to bigger conclusions outside of self-contained episodes with smaller conclusions. There is also possibility that target audiences may have changed in a way that due to the convenience of streaming services, animation series might have attracted adult audience to a degree that it is profitable for the writers to write all ages animation series with heavier plot elements. This is not to imply that older series like 1985 *She-Ra* does not also contain themes that only adults may understand, but the appeal to more mature audiences in the newer series is perhaps more prominent, feasibly due to an apparent trend where emotional struggle and mental conditions of the characters have an equal part in the story along with the action scenes. It

would be interesting point of future study to do more research on other contemporary cartoons with reference to older ones with additional look at the political atmospheres around the time of their production to conclusively decide how much social expectations affect the media produced.

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